(b) There was consensus among member-countries that negotiations on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) Agreement must proceed as per schedule so that it comes into force on 1st January 2006 as already agreed upon. Implementation of SAFTA Agreement will give a significant boost to economic activities in the region.

Import of elementary mercury

1014. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of elementary mercury has increased manifold during the last few years;

(b) if so, the details of imports during the last three years; and

(c) the names of industries who are importing mercury and whether mercury is being used as consumer product and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) : (a) and (b) The details of import of mercury are as under :—

Year	Quantity (in tons)	Value (Rs. in crore)
2001-02	260.44	4.48
2002-03	531.20	8.66
2003-04	197.46	4.06

(c) Mercury is used by industries engaged in making thermometers, barometers,electrical contacts, arc rectifiers, automatic switches, mercury vapour lamps and mercury-vapour boilers of large power installation etc. It is also employed in the electrolytic preparation of chlorine, caustic soda, acetic acid and acetone etc.

India International Trade Fair

1015. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of visitors in the International Trade Fair held from November 14, 2004 this year;